

not been able to match the growth of EXIM trade from India thereby foreign ships carry large amount of Indian cargo. Freight rates are decided on competitive basis.

Under performance of NHAI

1749. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the road sector projects are proving to be a speed-breaker along the infrastructure highway, with the sector being the poorest performer among all infrastructure sectors during April-June, 2006;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the road sector growth decelerated by a striking 37 per cent during the first quarter of the fiscal; and

(c) if so, whether Government have made investigations to find out the cause of under performance of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the action proposed thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) There was a press report indicating 37% decrease in growth rate. In fact declining trend in terms of the completed length is on account of the fact that National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase-I is gradually getting completed and only a part of it remains to be completed due to poor performance of contractors, while NHDP Phase-II projects have been awarded recently and their completion date is 2009.

Collection of Toll Tax

1750. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the norms, rules and guidelines in collecting Toll Tax on roads and bridges;

(b) how such contracts are given;

(c) whether they are required to pay Service Tax; and

(d) whether there is any time limit or monetary limit for collection of Toll Tax?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) National Highways Act, 1956, empowers the Central Government to levy and collect user fee (Toll) on bridges and road sections of National Highways. National Highways (Rate of Fee) Rules, 1997 provide the capping rate of user fee per Km. for projects involving conversion into four lane. The rules also provide rates of user fee to be charged on the bridges on the basis of initial cost of the bridge. The National Highways (collection of fees by any person for the use of section of National Highways/Permanent Bridge/Temporary Bridge on National Highways) Rules, 1997 provide guidelines of collection of user fee by any person. The National Highways (Fee for the use National Highways section and permanent Bridge-Public Funded Project) Rules, 1997 provide for collection of user fee on public funded projects.

(b) The collection of user fee on public funded projects is primarily done through Director General of Resettlement (DGR) sponsored ex-servicemen agencies and also through competitive biddings. In the case of Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) projects, user fee collection is done/retained by the concessionaire for the agreed concession period.

(c) Service tax is not payable on user fee (toll) collection contracts either through departmental or through competitive bidding.

(d) The user fee is to be collected in perpetuity.

Container security Initiatives

1751. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Container Security initiatives had been introduced in most of the ports in the world;

(b) if so, whether it has been introduced in our Indian ports; and

(c) if not, what are the bottlenecks for it and by when such hurdles can be overcome and the security initiatives are introduced?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) At present 50 seaports in the world are participating in the Container Security Initiative (CSI) programme. These ports account for approximately 82% of all containerised merchandise imported into US.